

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4400

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

USIA WASHDC

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TAGS: PFOR ET UR US

SUBJECT: SOVIET RELEASE ON 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF WWII

VICTORY OVER GERMANY

REF: USIA CIRCULAR 10592 OF 5 MAY

1. ETHIOPIAN HERALD (BUT NOT RPT NOT AMHARIC PRESS) OF MAY 9 CARRIES TWO FULL-PAGE APN RPT APN "ADVERTISEMENTS" ON SUBJECT ANNIVERSARY. ADVERTISEMENTS CONSIST OF SEVERAL ARTICLES ON SOVIET WAR EFFORT AGAINST EUROPEAN FASCIST POWERS. ARTICLES BY-LINED BY SUCH LUMINARIES AS MARSHAL IVAN YAKUBOVSKY AND FLEET ADMIRAL SERGEI GORSHKOV.

2. HEAVY-HANDED MATERIAL CONTAINS PASSAGES DENIGRATING CONTRIB-
UTION OF WESTERN ALLIES TO DEFEAT OF NAZI GERMANY AND FASCIST
ITALY, APPARENTLY INTENDED STILL FURTHER TO ENHANCE SIGNIFICANCE
OF SOVIET WAR EFFORT. PASSAGES IN QUESTION CONTRAST DEFEAT OF 176
ENEMY DIVISIONS, "MOST OF WHICH WENT DOWN IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE
WAR WHEN GERMANY WAS ALREADY DOOMED," WITH SOVIET UNION'S DECI-
SIVE ROLE IN ACCOUNTING FOR 80 PERCENT OF WEHRMACHT'S TOTAL
CASUALTIES, VIZ., 607 DIVISIONS. OTHER PASSAGES SPEAK OF SOVIET
TRIBUTE TO "LANDING OF THE ALLIES IN NORMANDY; IF WAS A WELL-

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PREPARED AND IN MANY RESPECTS SUCCESSFUL OPERATION . . . HOWEVER,

THE BULK OF THE ENEMY ARMED FORCES WERE ON THE SOVIET/GERMAN FRONT AT THE TIME . . . AND THE NAZIS HAD ONLY 60 DIVISIONS (IN WESTERN EUROPE) WHILE 240 ENEMY DIVISIONS . . . WERE FIGHTING ON THE SOVIET/GERMAN FRONT . . . WE CANNOT, OF COURSE, IGNORE THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OPENING OF THE SECOND FRONT IN EUROPE, LATE AS IT WAS, FOR HASTENING THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR. . ." AND SO FORTH.

3. SAME ISSUE OF PAPER CARRIES LETTER FROM BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO ETHIOPIA (FULL TEXT BY POUCH) REACTING TO APN ARTICLE WHICH HAD APPEARED APRIL 26. LETTER BEGINS: "READERS OF AN ARTICLE IN ETHIOPIAN HERALD OF 26 APRIL 1975 WILL HAVE GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE WAR 'TO SAVE WORLD CIVILIZATION FROM THE THREAT OF FASCIST VANDALISM' BEGAN IN THE EARLY HOURS OF 22 JUNE 1941; AND THEY WERE TOLD THAT 'UNDER THE PRESSURE OF THEIR OWN PEOPLES, THE RULING CIRCLES OF WESTERN POWERS WERE COMPELLED TO FORM A UNITED FRONT WITH THE USSR IN THE WAR AGAINST FASCIST GERMANY.'" LETTER CONTINUES THAT THIS COMES AS SURPRISE TO WRITER, WHO WAS HUNTING NAZI SUBMARINES IN NORTH ATLANTIC IN 1940. BRITISH AMBASSADOR THEN PROCEEDS BRIEFLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO SUMMARIZE HISTORY OF FIRST YEARS WWII, BEGINNING WITH INVASION OF POLAND IN '39; THE ANNOUNCEMENT THEREAFTER OF THE SOVIET-NAZI NON-AGGRESSION PACT; THE FRANCO-BRITISH DECLARATION OF WAR ON HITLER THEREAFTER; HITLER'S INVASION OF THE LOW COUNTRIES AND FRANCE IN 1940; THE DEFEAT OF THE ALLIES IN GREECE IN 1941 AND MUSSOLINI'S DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF THE ALLIES IN ETHIOPIA THAT SAME YEAR. THE AMBASSADOR CONCLUDED HIS TELLING LETTER WITH THE SIMPLE STATEMENT THAT "ALL THIS HAD HAPPENED BEFORE HITLER'S FORCES VIOLATED THE MOLOTOV/RIBBONTROP PACT BY INVADING THE SOVIET UNION ON 22 JUNE 1941" AND POINTS OUT THAT ASSERTION ABOVE-CITED ON WESTERN RULING CIRCLES IPSO FACTO NONSENSE.

4. EMBASSY IS CONSIDERING UTILITY/DRAWBACKS OF DIGNIFIED SHORT LOCAL RESPONSE TO MAY 9 "ADVERTISEMENT." RESPONSE WE ARE CONTEMPLATING WOULD EXPRESS SURPRISE THAT ANY LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF DEFEAT OF FASCISM HAD OMITTED MENTION OF JAPAN, WOULD CITE A FEW BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE STRUGGLE AGAINST JAPAN, AND WOULD NOTE DATE OF SOVIET ENTRY INTO WAR WITH JAPAN. AS FOR WAR WITH GERMANY, WE WOULD MENTION ONLY EXTENSIVE US LEND-LEASE ASSISTANCE TO THE SOVIET UNION, DRAWING FOR THIS PURPOSE ON REFTEL. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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5. BEFORE REACHING DECISION ON ADVANTAGES OF ANY SUCH LOCAL RESPONSE, AND ON ASSUMPTION THAT SIMILAR HEAVY-HANDED SOVIET PROPAGANDA APPEARING ELSEWHERE, WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHETHER DEPARTMENT/USIA CONTEMPLATING RELEVANT RELEASE FOR WORLDWIDE CONSUMPTION WHICH WE MIGHT THEN DISSEMINATE HERE.

6. WOULD WELCOME EARLY REPLY.

HUMMEL

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